



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Alaska's Coastal Program

## *Caring for Alaska's Coastal Habitats*

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program is to conserve healthy coastal ecosystems for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people. It accomplishes this through cooperative partnerships that identify, restore, and protect habitat in priority coastal areas.*



*Alaska's 34,000 miles of shoreline comprise over a third of the United States' coasts.*

### Importance of Coastal Resources

Nationwide, coastal ecosystems make up only 10 percent of the land area, but 80 percent of the nation's waterfowl and non-game migratory bird species depend on these areas for nesting, foraging, and resting habitats.

Alaska's world-famous anadromous fish resources and shellfish industry depend on coastal ecosystems. Estuaries, nearshore marine waters, and coastal wetlands are also vital to the state's spectacular seabird and shorebird populations. All of Alaska's threatened and endangered animals live in or near coastal or marine habitats.



### Why Do Alaska's Coastal Habitats Need Help?

Three quarters of Alaska's residents live in its southern coastal ecosystems. These systems support a diversity of fish and wildlife species, while providing jobs, subsistence foods, and recreational opportunities for Alaskans and visitors. As the coastal population increases, and recreational and commercial enterprises expand, there is a growing need to maintain and restore the functions of these irreplaceable ecosystems.

### Coastal Program Facts

The Coastal Program supports voluntary partnerships that restore and protect wetland, riparian, and upland coastal habitats.

#### The Coastal Program:

- Supports projects on both private and non-federal public lands;
- Encourages broad partnerships with other Federal, State, Native, and local government agencies, conservation organizations, businesses, and private landowners;
- Provides partners with both technical and financial assistance for on-the-ground fish and wildlife projects;
- Leverages U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funds with partner funds and in-kind services to increase our ability to conserve important habitats;
- Assists partners in applying for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Wetlands, North American Wetlands Conservation, and Private Stewardship Grants, as well as grants from other Federal agencies.

## What Does the Coastal Program Do?

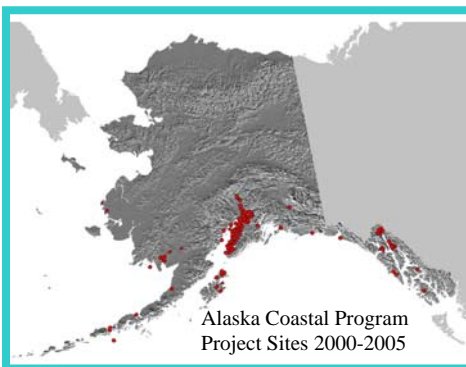
In Alaska, the Coastal Program provides technical and financial assistance for project that:

- Protect or restore coastal habitats;
- Compile and analyze coastal natural resource data;
- Inform and educate about coastal fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.

## Project Examples

The Coastal Program supports a diversity of projects, including those that:

- Restore stream-side and coastal habitats;
- Protect undeveloped coastal mud flats, tidal marshes, wetlands, riparian areas, buffering uplands, and other coastal habitats;
- Improve fish passage;
- Control exotic invasive species;
- Assess threats to coastal resources, and develop solutions to those threats;
- Inform the public about the values of coastal habitats and low-impact methods of access, use or development.



*Alaska's Coastal Program provides technical and financial support for south coastal Alaska projects that identify, protect, and restore high priority coastal habitats.*

## Accomplishments

Since establishment in 2000, Alaska's Coastal Program has cooperated on more than 143 projects.

Recent partnerships include:

**Habitat Protection Funding.** The Coastal Program has become an information clearinghouse for partners in pursuit of private and agency funding for habitat protection projects. We actively reach out to state agencies and non-governmental organizations to educate them about available funding programs, and provide technical assistance, including grant writing support. Since 2000, our partners have successfully competed for nine North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants, eleven National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants, and three National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants totaling almost \$11,000,000.

**Invasive Rodent Plan.** The Coastal Program is partnering with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and other state, municipal and local agencies; native organizations and other non-governmental organizations to develop a statewide management plan to control the spread of invasive rodents, particularly Norway rats, in Alaska's fish and wildlife habitats and reduce the threat to native plants and wildlife.

**Coastal Villages Land Conservation Plan.** Chevak Traditional Council is partnering with the Coastal Program and the staff of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge to develop long-term conservation policies through the establishment of the Chevak, Paimiut, Newtok, Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay Land Protection Plan. These five communities are dependant on migratory birds, fish, land animals, plants, berries, and marine mammals for their physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing.

*For more information about these or other projects in Southcentral and Southwest Alaska, contact John DeLapp of the Anchorage F&W Field Office at 907/271 1799, john\_delapp@fws.gov.*

**Ship Creek Restoration Coordination.** The Coastal Program is partnering with Anchorage Waterways Council on a comprehensive watershed and fisheries restoration initiative on Anchorage's Ship Creek, in an effort to return the 29 mile-long stream to a more natural condition favorable to wild fish runs.

**Green Zone Conservation Planning.** The Coastal Program is supporting the Southeast Alaska Land Trust in prioritizing coastal habitats for protection in a 20 mile stretch of coastline immediately north of Juneau. Two major habitat protection projects are underway or planned, with nearly 400 acres of critical coastal wetlands and uplands to be protected for wildlife habitat and public use.

**Pullen Creek Restoration Planning.** This project allows the Skagway Traditional Council and the Taiya Inlet Watershed Council to identify habitat restoration needs, generate community interest, and identify funding sources for work on this impaired urban stream, where up to 800,000 cruise ship visitors annually have the opportunity to observe spawning coho and chum salmon.

**SE Alaska Coastal and Intertidal Map Database.** In a joint project with The Nature Conservancy, National Marine Fisheries Service, State of Alaska, and the National Park Service, approximately 2,400 miles of SE Alaska shoreline was inventoried in 2005 using the ShoreZone imagery and mapping protocol. Acquisition of this high resolution shoreline and intertidal imagery will contribute to long term monitoring, oil spill contingency planning, and sustainable coastal development, and will eventually link to existing mapping databases in Southcentral Alaska, British Columbia and Washington State.

*For projects in Southeast Alaska, contact Neil Stichert of the Juneau F&W Field Office at 907/780-1180, neil\_stichert@fws.gov.*